



**Virginia Reading Assessment for  
Elementary and Special Education Teachers**

**and**

**Virginia Reading Assessment for  
Reading Specialists**

**STUDY GUIDE**

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

---

PEARSON EDUCATION, INC.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## Section 1: About the Virginia Reading Assessment 1-1

---

Introduction

Test Development Process

Structure of the Tests

---

## Section 2: Preparing for the Tests 2-1

---

Studying for the Test

Test-Taking Tips

---

## Section 3: Sample Test Items for Elementary and Special Education Teachers 3-1

---

Multiple-Choice Items

Constructed-Response Items

---

## Section 4: Sample Test Items for Reading Specialists 4-1

---

Multiple-Choice Items

Constructed-Response Items

---

## Section 5: Preparation Resources 5-1

---

Glossary

Acknowledgments

Reading List

*Readers should be advised that this study guide, including many of the excerpts used herein, is protected by federal copyright law.*

Copyright © 2010 Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s).

All rights reserved. Evaluation Systems, Pearson, P.O. Box 226, Amherst, MA 01004

Virginia Reading Assessment, VRA, and the Virginia Reading Assessment logo are trademarks, in the U.S. and/or other countries, of the Virginia Department of Education and Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s).

Pearson and its logo are trademarks in the U.S. and/or other countries of Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s).

## SECTION 1

# ABOUT THE VIRGINIA READING ASSESSMENT

The Virginia Department of Education has contracted with the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson to create and administer the Virginia Reading Assessment® (VRA®), which measures preparation in the components of effective reading instruction.

For current information on requirements and program policies for the VRA, see the most recent version of the registration bulletin. You are encouraged to read these requirements and policies carefully and to determine with your academic advisor the best time for you to take the VRA.

The Virginia Department of Education and the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson are available to answer questions you may have. Select "Contacts" from the Virginia Reading Assessment Web site at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com) for more information.

## Test Development Process

This topic describes the major steps in developing the VRA.

Step	Description
Develop the Test Blueprints	<p>The content of each test is documented in the test blueprint. VRA test blueprints consist of test domains that each include a set of test objectives, along with a set of descriptive statements that further elaborate the content of each test objective.</p> <p>During preparation of the test blueprints, key state and national documents and Virginia educators were consulted. Committees of Virginia educators reviewed the test blueprints and made revisions, as necessary, to ensure that the test blueprints were accurate, free of bias, job related, representative of the diversity of the state, and consistent with the purposes of the program.</p>
Conduct Match Study for Test Blueprints	<p>To verify the alignment of the test blueprints with Virginia requirements, Virginia educators were asked to rate the agreement of each test blueprint with the English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools (SOL) and the <i>Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel</i> in identified areas. Based on these ratings, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson determined the content of the test blueprints, and a content validation survey of each test blueprint was conducted.</p>
Validate Test Content	<p>The content validation survey was conducted using randomly sampled practicing Virginia public school educators and teacher preparation program faculty to ensure that the test blueprints reflect the knowledge and skills considered to be important for performing the job of an educator in Virginia.</p>
Develop Test Items	<p>Next, test items were developed to assess the content defined by the test blueprints. Committees of Virginia educators were convened to review and approve the test items. Several hundred students preparing to teach at different licensure levels participated in field tests of the test items at field test sites throughout Virginia.</p>
Conduct Match Study for Test Items	<p>As part of the planned validity verification, a second match study was conducted with Virginia educators to determine the match of individual VRA test items with each test blueprint and with Virginia requirements.</p>
Set Passing Scores	<p>A committee of Virginia educators will convene following the first several test administrations to recommend the passing score for each VRA test. The final passing scores will be determined by the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Education.</p>

## Structure of the Tests

The VRA for Elementary and Special Education Teachers and the VRA for Reading Specialists consist of multiple-choice items and constructed-response items. The multiple-choice items require candidates to select the best choice from a list of four possible responses. The constructed-response items require candidates to write a response of varying length based on the knowledge being tested.

The content of each VRA test is documented in its test blueprint, which is available on the VRA Web site at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com). Refer to "Read the Test Blueprint" in Section 2 for a description of the content and format of the VRA test blueprints. The VRA test structure is as follows:

- Each test field is organized into four to six domains defining the major content areas of the test.
- Each domain includes one or more test objectives. The test objectives are broad, conceptual statements, written in language that reflects some of the skills, knowledge, and understanding that an educator needs in order to teach reading in Virginia public schools.
- Each test objective is clarified and further described by a descriptive statement, providing examples of the types of content covered by the test objective.
- Each multiple-choice item is written to assess understanding of a test objective.
- Each constructed-response item is written to assess understanding of one or more test objectives.

Refer to the sections that follow for detailed information on the content of each test.

## The VRA for Elementary and Special Education Teachers

The VRA for Elementary and Special Education Teachers is comprised of 90 multiple-choice items and four (4) constructed-response items. You should plan to use about 15 minutes to respond to each constructed-response item.

The following table lists the number of multiple-choice and constructed-response items occurring on each section of the test as they relate to the content domains of the VRA for Elementary and Special Education Teachers test blueprint. Refer to the VRA Web site at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com) to read the test blueprint.

Domain	Multiple-Choice Items (MCIs)	Constructed-Response Items
I. Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching (includes knowledge of formal and informal assessment techniques and use of diagnostic data to plan effective reading instruction)	17–19 (approx 20% of the MCIs)	1
II. Oral Language and Oral Communication (includes knowledge of phonemic awareness, listening and speaking skills, and instructional strategies for speakers of other languages and dialects)	17–19 (approx 20% of the MCIs)	1
III. Reading Development (includes knowledge of reading skills and processes in the areas of phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and reading fluency)	35–37 (approx 40% of the MCIs)	1
IV. Writing and Research (includes knowledge of writing skills, processes, and conventions; creative expression; use of technology for writing and research)	17–19 (approx 20% of the MCIs)	1

## The VRA for Reading Specialists

The VRA for Reading Specialists is comprised of 90 multiple-choice items and two (2) constructed-response items. You should plan to use about 30 minutes to respond to the constructed-response item and about 60 minutes to respond to the case study assignment.

The following table lists the number of multiple-choice and constructed-response items occurring on each section of the test as they relate to the content domains of the VRA for Reading Specialists test blueprint. Refer to the VRA Web site at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com) to read the test blueprint.

Domain	Multiple-Choice Items (MCIs)	Constructed-Response Items
I. Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching (includes knowledge of formal and informal assessment techniques and use of diagnostic data to plan effective reading instruction)	17–19 (approx 20% of the MCIs)	
II. Oral Language and Oral Communication (includes knowledge of phonemic awareness, listening and speaking skills, and instructional strategies for speakers of other languages and dialects)	8–10 (approx 10% of the MCIs)	
III. Reading Development (includes knowledge of reading skills and processes in the areas of phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and reading fluency)	35–37 (approx 40% of the MCIs)	
IV. Writing and Research (includes knowledge of writing skills, processes, and conventions; creative expression; use of technology for writing and research)	8–10 (approx 10% of the MCIs)	
V. Specialized Knowledge and Leadership Skills (includes knowledge of language acquisition; learning disabilities and literacy development; child psychology including learning behaviors; cultural contexts of literacy development)	17–19 (approx 20% of the MCIs)	1 (without case study)
VI. Integrated Knowledge and Understanding: Case Study		1 (with case study)